

ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION:
THE ROLE OF ONBOARDING IN EMPLOYEE LONGEVITY

by

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DISSERTATION

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my mom and stepdad, Dr. Jan West and Ken West, in whose footsteps

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ABSTRACT

Organizational Socialization:
The Role of Onboarding in Employee Longevity

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This study proposed testing a model linking employees' onboarding experience within the first three months at an organization with their tenure through the mediators of perceived supervisor (PSS) and organizational support (POS) while considering the moderator of reason for leaving. We hypothesized that data would show positive linkages between onboarding experience and increased PSS and POS leading to increased tenure and that these relationships would change under conditions of the moderator. The data included employees from a national financial institution who had all voluntarily left the organization and who also completed an onboarding survey after their first 90 days on the job as well as an exit survey upon their egress. Results indicated a significant relationship between onboarding and tenure, PSS and tenure, and PSS and POS. The proposed moderated mediation model was not supported, indicating that the effect of onboarding on tenure does not occur as a serial mediation process through PSS and POS, but rather directly, from fostering the variables of onboarding and PSS. Implications and future directions are discussed.

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CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS ONBOARDING?

An employee's work procures more for them than just a paycheck. Since a person spends more than half their waking hours, and often more, at their job, it is essential to understand that the benefits, experiences, lessons, and wounds a person receives while working may be equal to or greater than the output they produce in their role. A person's initial experience when entering an organization can have long-lasting effects on their job productivity, satisfaction, loyalty to and perception of the organization, as well as their decision to stay or leave the company. Some statistics have shown that around 25 percent of the American working population goes through a career transition annually and that many of these transitions fail (Rollag, Parise, & Cross, 2005).

Additionally, other challenges include those such as the rate at which hourly workers leave their jobs in the first four months – 50 percent (Krauss, 2010). Starting well in an organization has benefits for employees and companies alike. Organizations can help employees start well by providing structure, clarifying expectations, and reducing uncertainty in the employee lifecycle. Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, and Erez (2001) proposed that socialization leads to feelings of being tied to a company personally and professionally. Reducing uncertainty sooner rather than later helps employees feel valued, which leads to increased organizational commitment and a reduced tendency or desire to leave the organization for lack of being valued or providing needed guidance (Cable & Parsons, 2001).

Past research has addressed the relationship between onboarding and turnover, as well as perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support (Allen & Shanock, 2013; DeConinck & Johnson, 2009; Levinson, 1965; Maertz Jr., Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007; Perrot et al., 2014; Zhang, Liao, Yan, & Guo, 2014). The current study proposes a model

wherein perceived onboarding experience affects tenure at an organization through an employee's perceived supervisor and organizational support, but that this effect of onboarding on tenure depends on the employee's reason for leaving the organization. The purpose of the current study is to expand the existing organizational socialization and turnover literature by exploring how onboarding affects an alternative measure of turnover, tenure, and through which mechanisms and under what circumstances this effect might occur. No other studies have suggested that onboarding acts upon business outcomes in a serial mediation process so investigation of mediation will either lend support to or refute the impact of onboarding's contextual effects. Additionally, reasons for leaving is often used as a measure of turnover such that it performs as a criterion variable while in the current study it acts as a categorical moderator which contributes to the literature by using a turnover measure in a different form rather than purely as an outcome.

The purpose of onboarding is to give employees a perspective from which they can understand the goals, duties, and legal implications of their specific roles within the context of the organization (Meyer & Bartels, 2017). According to Wanberg's (2012) Oxford Handbook of Organizational Socialization, onboarding is a narrower term than organizational socialization (explored later) and includes the organizationally-specific tasks aimed at facilitating employees' adjustments to their new positions. Regardless of the name, what matters to organizations practically is the faster an employee feels welcomed and prepared for their role, the quicker they will be able to contribute to the mission of the organization (Bauer, 2010).

Authors have noted two distinct forms of onboarding namely formal and informal. Formal onboarding is a structured process wherein the employee moves through a fixed duration of onboarding with a beginning and end point and milestones throughout the process. Informal

onboarding encompasses an experience that is open-ended wherein the employee is ushered in and given little to no formal guidance on their role, the culture of the organization, or their purpose in the organization. The latter is often referred to as a “sink or swim” approach where employees must figure things out for themselves regarding what to do and where they fit in the organizational context (Louis, 1980; Louis, Posner, & Powell, 1983; Zahrly & Tosi, 1989).

Orientation is another term often seen within the onboarding and socialization literature. Wanous (1992) defined orientation as a series of short-term experiences that initiate the new employee into organizational information, such as paperwork, compliance, and any preliminary skills training needed, with the sole purpose of minimizing the stress that comes from beginning a new job. It might take the appearance of providing documentation and receipt of initial information about the organizational environment while socialization has to do with the incorporation of the employee’s identity into a new environment. It is to be expected that an orientation would include information on such things as an organization’s hierarchy, mission, and functional area communication; however, it will not provide information concerning the politics of an organization, usually understood as informal knowledge about power statuses and how employees make decisions (Kacmar & Baron, 1999). While orientation might be on the front end of a formal onboarding program, indirect information, such as politics, would be something addressed by relationship building throughout or toward the end of the onboarding process.

Socialization, often used as a synonym for onboarding, is a more personally internal and drawn-out process. Wanberg (2012) described socialization as a more broad adjustment and learning phase when entering a new role, which encompasses organizational activities, as well as individual activities. Socialization potentially includes onboarding (although onboarding may not

always assist socialization) and mainly encompasses the proactive processes of the newcomer such as information seeking used to acclimatize to the new environment (Wanberg, 2012). Although similar, this author expressed the view of not using onboarding and socialization interchangeably. However, in attempting to research onboarding practices, socialization is the predominant term used in psychological science databases.

Socialization consists of methods companies use to help new employees become identified with the organization during early organizational experiences. This, in turn, helps to reduce newcomers' anxiety stemming from joining a new environment and allows them to build needed attitudes, knowledge, and behavior associated with their job and the organization (Bauer, Morrison, & Callister, 1998; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). Mostly, the goal of socialization is to help the newcomer adjust from the status of an outsider ignorant of organizational nuances and expectations to an insider proficient in both. Specifically, socialization occurs through what are known as socialization tactics whereby employers seek to assimilate new employees by structuring how (group or individually) rather than what the newcomer learns (Wang, Hom, & Allen, 2017).

If employees participate in an onboarding process, rather than absorbing information passively, this usually occurs through proactive sensemaking and information seeking. Therefore, the socialization process is partially the organization's responsibility and partially the newcomer's. Ashforth and Saks (1996) defined information seeking as acquiring knowledge regarding both the organization and employee's role which allows them to survive in the new role. Miller and Jablin (1991) proposed a typology of information seeking for employees as they enter a new organization. In it, the authors suggest that employees seek referent, appraisal, and relational information which can each be proxies for role clarity, self-efficacy, and social

acceptance. Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, and Rosenthal (1964) defined role clarity as having adequate information about the duties and objectives of a job within the context of the organization, as well as knowledge of normative behavior used to achieve goals. Self-efficacy means that the employee believes they can achieve salient expectations in the role, and social acceptance means they have the support of their supervisors and colleagues in learning the expectations of their role, as well as performing therein. Bauer, Bodner, Erdogan, Truxillo, and Tucker (2007) demonstrated that these types of information seeking each related significantly to organizational commitment.

Nicholson and Imaizumi (1993) referred to this information seeking in a different way, namely as an adjustment to work, in which the employee seeks to match the requirements of their new job with their attitudes and behaviors. Matching job requirements with attitudes and behaviors then leads to organizational commitment as they see themselves more and more as fitting into the organization and thus perceiving organizational fit (Fu, Shaffer, & Harrison, 2005). Allen (2006) noted that many other studies have found that successful organizational adjustment leads to organizational commitment among other positive organizational outcomes (Bauer & Green, 1998; Brett, Feldman, & Weingart, 1990; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Morrison, 1993b, 1993a; Wanberg & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2000).

Fu et al. (2005) described many other methods employees use to adapt in new employment contexts, such as feedback seeking, relationship building, negotiation and positive framing (Ashforth & Black, 1996; Dawis & Lofquist, 1984). While people may use these methods at any time in the employee lifecycle, they may use them more strategically during the onboarding process.

Theory Relating to Onboarding Processes and Outcomes

Numerous theories may be brought to bear to support the model presented in the current study. Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed self-determination theory, wherein they attempt to explain the human drive to satisfy three psychological needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy. The authors describe relatedness as a feeling that an employee is receiving or perceiving support from work peers, competence as a feeling of capability in completing work tasks, while autonomy is the feeling that one initiates their own work-related actions. In this theory, internal motivation works in tandem with the external environment to interactively satisfy these basic needs (Deci & Ryan, 1985). In the current study, the onboarding items include those reflecting social support, competence and expectation alignment mirroring the ideas of relatedness and competence needs within the theory nicely. Expectation alignment can relate to feelings of autonomy since, if expectations align, the employee feels they can know what they to expect in their work environment and effectively act to succeed. The theory fits nicely into other fields, such as positive psychology and positive organizational behavior and emphasizes an individual's optimal function only under the circumstance that they have successfully and effectively integrated themselves into a broader social environment (Luthans & Youssef, 2007). Integration is pertinent regarding onboarding since the goal of onboarding is to help people become more effective in their new environments. Griffin, Neal, and Parker (2007) remarked that, in order to integrate optimally, a person's ability as well as their power to adapt to the new environment positively is vital. Self-determination theory dovetails nicely with another theory that can relate to onboarding.

In the theory of work adjustment, Lofquist and Dawis (1969) suggested that employees seek a congruence or correspondence between themselves and their environment. Similar to the

idea of cognitive dissonance - when people have an inconsistency between their attitudes and behavior they will seek to make them consistent - people also seek a harmonious relationship between themselves and their environment (Festinger, 1957). When congruence is not the case in a work environment, stress, job dissatisfaction, low motivation, low commitment, and conflict may increase, resulting in a person seeking to rebalance the incongruence between self and environment or leaving the setting altogether. The need for congruence encapsulates the underlying assumption of the theory, which states that people are seeking to either establish or maintain a correspondence of internal with external (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). The authors proposed the idea that initial actions in a job environment are usually helping people learn and achieve the requirements therein and experience the rewards available; however, if this does not occur, or there is a lack of correspondence, an individual will seek to establish correspondence either by altering their behavior or by leaving the environment. Practical implications of this theory suggest that in monitoring new employee progress the focus should be on how satisfied the employee is with their role and that the organization should observe his job performance.

Yoon and Lawler's (2006) relational cohesion theory focused on how individuals attached themselves to a collective whole and suggested that organizations provide individuals with three specific categories of capital through relational exchanges which encourage this attachment. These categories are human capital, social capital, and cultural capital. The authors proposed that organizations provide human capital to individuals via transfer of knowledge, skills, and experiences in the organization, social capital through relationships, and cultural capital through the transfer of organizational culture, norms, and history.

These theories help to explain the critical transference of both knowledge and identity as employees seek to incorporate themselves into their new work environments via onboarding.

Allen and Shanock (2013) made this theory a foundational aspect of their study suggesting that as organizations and employees exchange capital, such as during times of onboarding and socialization, this should engender a sense of investment and commitment from the organization which then motivates affective commitment from employees. It is important to note that the current study does not propose to test the linkages suggested by these theories. Instead, the theories suggest why the variables investigated in the study should be linked. The following section will highlight the relationships among the variables in the proposed model.

Social Support Aspects of Onboarding

Social support is an aspect of onboarding which research has repeatedly shown is imperative to a positive adaptation process among new employees, as well as related to positive organizational outcomes. Bauer et al. (2007) found that social acceptance was related to all five employee outcomes examined – job satisfaction, performance, organizational commitment, intentions to remain, and negatively related to actual turnover. Social acceptance is an aspect of social support (Sarason & Sarason, 2009). The importance of social support to an effective onboarding program is also evidenced in a study demonstrating how onboarding and orientation contributed to advanced practice nurses feeling connected to their peers, experiencing role clarity, as well as credentialing and preparation (Goldschmidt, Rust, Torowicz, & Kolb, 2011). Additionally, survey takers from Goldschmidt et al. (2011) recommended other aspects that fall into the category of social interaction to augment the onboarding program even further. These results lead to the conclusion that social support during initial organizational entry is imperative and most effective in achieving organizational outcomes that are beneficial to the employees, as well as to the organization (Meyer & Bartels, 2017).

Also lending support to the importance of social support is Evan's (1963) research that

analyzed group size in training programs and its impact on turnover in the workplace. He found that peer groups including three or more people had the lowest levels of turnover compared to groups of two people or single isolated persons. Peer groups have a significant impact on the socialization process through reducing strain on new employees and helping reduce tensions through shared experiences (Evan, 1963).

Models of Employee Adjustment

According to some authors, socialization consists of at minimum three stages: an anticipatory stage before organizational entry, the encounter stage, where the newcomer enters the organization, then the adaptation stage, where the employee settles into the organization (Bauer & Green, 1998; Feldman, 1976; Louis, 1980). Everyone moves through these stages over different time periods, but when considered in light of onboarding, the stages are generally considered to take anywhere from three to six months to a year (Bauer et al., 2007). The type of onboarding experience encountered by employees may be designed to achieve adjustment goals using specific patterns or tactics.

One classification of socialization tactics came from Van Maanen and Schein (1979), who categorized organizational socialization methods into six dimensions - these onboarding tactics are either collective or individual, formal or informal, sequential or variable, fixed or variable, serial or disjunctive, investiture or divestiture. The authors describe collective vs. individual tactics as new employees either going through shared experiences with others or alone, which either help to produce homogenous attitudes or more diverse ones. They describe formal vs. informal tactics as either separating the new employee from existing organizational members under the status of a newcomer or incorporating them as soon as possible with other organizational members, which allows them to become part of an in-group faster and without a

more formalized in-group status or experience-earning process. The authors continue with sequential versus random socialization tactics wherein a sequential process includes clear and objective steps leading to a performance target while random processes involve onboarding steps that are unclear, unknown, vague, or often changing.

Another dimension described by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) is fixed tactics, wherein a new employee knows how long it will take to finish a step in the onboarding process, contrasted with variable tactics in which new employees have little insight as to when they will progress from one step of onboarding to another. In serial tactics, employees receive support from existing organization members who groom them to assume positions similar to their own, while in disjunctive tactics, employees are not following or mentored by existing organizational members. Lastly, the authors describe investiture tactics, closely related to serial tactics, in which newcomer characteristics and skills are validated as useful and helpful to the organization, whereas in divestiture tactics the organization attempts to remove, change, or take away personal characteristics of the employee. These tactic dimensions provide a valuable framework for creating, evaluating and improving onboarding programs in any organization.

Griffeth and Hom (2001) suggested that tactics which are collective, informal, sequential, fixed, serial, and investiture will be more likely to increase organizational commitment and reduce turnover. Other authors echoed this sentiment suggesting that tactics which provide information about the structure of onboarding experiences and tasks (sequential tactics), as well as about the how long these should take to complete (fixed tactics) will presumably lead to increased feelings of positive social exchange which then translates into perceived organizational support (POS) and affective commitment in return (Allen & Shanock, 2013). Tactics which Jones (1986) later categorized as institutional (see below) tend to predict higher POS and lower

turnover (Allen & Shanock, 2013).

Jones (1986) later grouped these six continuums into two categories - individualized or institutionalized. He theorized that individualized tactics included individual, informal, random, variable, disjunctive, and divestiture tactics. Individualized tactics in onboarding are more random, linked to newcomer preferences and capabilities, do not manage expectations, and contain ambiguity about the onboarding process. Institutional tactics, on the other hand, included those categorized as collective, formal, sequential, fixed, and serial. Investiture tactics include methods which make the onboarding process observably structured and manage employee expectations before the process begins or as it occurs. Smaller organizations may be less likely to have a formalized onboarding process and to use the individualized tactics while larger established organizations might be more likely to have a formal onboarding process with more institutionalized tactics. However, there may also be tactics used in larger organizations that are more individualized, if they have not thoroughly planned out all aspects of their onboarding program, which could lead to confusion and perceived lack of social support.

Taormina (1994) constructed an onboarding measure which included four factors of training, understanding, co-worker support and prospects for the future as individual meaningful and necessary aspects of onboarding. A factor analysis indicated three factors, namely that training and understanding seemed to be different perspectives of a similar concept. The author moved forward with 16 items on the final scale representing three construct subscales imperative to successful onboarding of Orientation, Coworker Support, and Prospects.

Similar in some aspects to Taormina (1994), Bauer (2010) proposed a four-level model of onboarding, the most effective programs of which will touch on all four stages - Compliance, Clarification, Culture, and Connection. These stages increase in importance and impact on

organizational commitment as the employee moves through them. In the compliance stage, the organization educates employees on regulations and legal policies at the organization. In the clarification stage, employees receive performance expectations for their position, which might include training, how to document projects or progress, and performance criteria. In the culture stage, the organization educates the employee on the organization's history, tenets, mission and social norms. Finally, the connection stage occurs when the employee is able to develop social relationships both formal and informal in the organization (Bauer, 2010). According to Cable and Parsons (2001), it is likely that new employees will recognize better organizational fit with companies which attempt to decrease uncertainty earlier on in the employee's tenure rather than waiting until clarification is needed and then having to proactively seek out information themselves with little guidance. These authors also found that perceived person/organization fit was significantly related to actual turnover decisions. Bauer (2010) stated that, if employees can experience all four stages, they are well positioned to experience significantly higher perceptions of organizational support and commitment as well as other positive factors. Therefore, onboarding is primarily the organizationally-initiated process of introducing and facilitating newcomers' adjustment to their roles.

Taormina (1994) includes a facet of onboarding, future prospects, which Bauer does not. Bauer (2010) considers the final level, connection to be the most essential level as it encompasses the social support needed for successful onboarding. This stage is like the glue that allows other stages to be successful. The current study elects to use Bauer's four-level model to categorize onboarding items rather than mapping them to Taormina's Organizational Socialization Inventory constructs.

CHAPTER 2

VARIABLES CONNECTED TO TURNOVER

Onboarding and Turnover

Turnover, defined as individually initiated movement across the membership boundary of an organization, has many predictors (Price, 1977). Central to the present effort, factors that play into turnover may begin as far back as an employee's entry experience into an organization. How organizations manage preliminary interaction with individual jobs and other members of the organization may influence how long and whether their members stay (Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986).

Selden and Sowa (2015) found that several high-performance work practices were significantly related to lower voluntary turnover, and one of them, along with succession of leadership, employee relations, and employee compensation, was onboarding. They measured onboarding using three items reworded from existing studies of human resource management with a Cronbach's alpha of .73 (Selden & Sowa, 2015). The three items were "Carefully selected mentors are assigned to new hires," "Significant attention and effort are put toward integrating the new hire and ensuring they have the support they need" and "Regular reviews are scheduled during the first year of a new hire's tenure to check in on their progress." These items refer to concepts that are similar to some of the four stages of Bauer's 2010 model of onboarding, including compliance, clarification, and connection; however, the second item seems to be dealing with both the culture and connection stages confounding what is measured. Selden and Sowa's (2015) results indicated, using hierarchical multiple regression, that a one unit increase in onboarding led to a 2.4% reduction in voluntary turnover. They also suggested that future research should focus on the high-performance work practices and the specific conditions which

influence turnover and other organizational outcomes. Onboarding is one example of a high-performance work practice, and the current study attempts to parse out the effect of onboarding on tenure.

Past researchers have shown linkages between socialization and turnover intention, a significant predictor of actual turnover (Allen & Meyer, 1990a; Allen & Meyer 1990b; Ashforth & Saks, 1996; Cable & Parsons, 2001; Jones, 1986). Meyer and Bartels (2017) found that numerous studies had cited a direct inverse connection between effective onboarding and turnover (Cable, Gino, & Staats, 2013; Klein & Weaver, 2000; Lavigna, 2009; Snell, 2006). According to Feldman (1976), socialization done well transforms an employee from an outsider to a participating and productive insider. Bauer et al. (2007) found that organizational socialization, as well as information seeking, was related to turnover through social acceptance. Feldman (1988) and Fisher (1986) both indicated that one of the possible drivers of withdrawal, a predictor of actual turnover in new employees is having inadequate socialization. A lack of basic organizational knowledge, reporting structure and rules, especially after being chosen by an organization because of the value they can bring, can and often does lead employees to feel lost and unvalued.

Some authors have suggested that the initial phase of entry into an organization is a particularly vulnerable time for new employees, as they are trying to make sense of their new environment, and those who struggle in adaptation to the new circumstance may end up leaving if they encounter too many initial failures (Bauer et al., 1998; Feldman, 1976a). Allen (2006) examined the effects of specific socialization tactics on turnover, in particular, the serial and investiture tactics popularized by Van Maanen and Schein (1979) and Jones (1986). He found that serial tactics, in which experienced organizational members come alongside new employees

as role models or mentors, and investiture tactics, in which new employees receive positive social support from others in the organization, were negatively related to turnover. Specifically, Allen (2006) found that for each one unit increase in positive social support a new employee received, the odds of quitting were reduced by a factor of 0.524. The model of mentoring in which a person shows another what to do and then provides feedback as the trainee does it themselves (“on-the-job” training) can provide guidance, encouragement, and reassurance, into task mastery which helps keep motivation high and enables a trainee to persevere through initial failures. Additionally, Kammery-Mueller and Wanberg (2003) found that leader influence was predictive of political knowledge, an adjustment outcome stemming from effective onboarding, and was the only socialization aspect significantly related to reduced turnover in their study. Payne and Huffman (2005) found that the serial socialization tactic of mentoring was related to turnover through partial mediation of organizational commitment, such that employees who participated in mentoring had decreased odds of turning over by as much as 38 percent.

Dai and De Meuse (2007) pulled together multiple experimental examples in organizations of how onboarding practically and positively affected turnover rates. One study they cited, Ganzel (1998), found that employees going through a formal onboarding program were 69% better chance of remaining at a company, while Ernst & Young demonstrated that employees who went through a carefully structured orientation had double the likelihood of staying with the company more than two years (Hewitt, 2003 as cited in Dai & Meuse, 2007). Dai and Meuse cite Hammonds (2005), who found upgrading onboarding in a company reduced turnover from 70% at six months to 16%. Additionally, Lee (2006) found that an upgraded onboarding process reduced turnover from 200% annually to 8% in a manufacturing company. Finally, they cited Hewitt (2003), who found that companies who implemented more resources

and time into onboarding saw the highest levels of engagement. Clearly, there is a link between an employee's initial guiding experience in a new organizational environment and their likelihood of staying, and that this link spans across industries and work contexts.

If there is reasonable evidence that onboarding leads to a reduction in turnover, then the next logical step to investigate is how much longer people stay in a job or organization after having experienced this organizational benefit. Are there significant differences in lengths of service based on the onboarding received? Eventually, everyone leaves every job, either by choice, by expulsion, or by death. Thus it is imperative to examine how a high-performance work practice such as onboarding impacts how long an individual is likely to stay with an organization. Another question of interest stemming from this line of thought includes how much onboarding is enough onboarding to make a noticeable difference in employee tenure?

Attitudes, such as perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support, help us understand why people stay in their jobs. Those who leave voluntarily are important to assess since it is possible these relational attitudes influenced them to stay for the time that they did.

The model proposed in the current study includes an overall measure of onboarding and attempts to provide a framework for whether it is related to perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support and thereby influences employee tenure through a sequential process. An exploratory analysis tests whether these relationships are moderated based on an employee's reason for leaving. This introduction will now focus on how the author believes these variables are related as proposed and demonstrated by past research.

H1: Onboarding should be positively associated with tenure.

Attitudes Related to Turnover

Perceived organizational support. (R. Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchinson, & Sowa, 1986) defined perceived organizational support as the extent to which an organization will provide employees with adequate work conditions, stimulating work, and compensate them fairly for their efforts. Additionally, perceived organizational support might include aspects of work, such as training and willingness to help the newcomer adapt to new situations.

As stated in the onboarding section, relationship building is integral to a holistic and successful onboarding experience and helps lead to positive organizational outcomes, as well as meeting felt needs through perceptions of social support. Researchers have identified these relational needs as one of the most significant and foundational needs of people in general (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Some suggest that relationships are so crucial to human flourishing that they help explain why organizational socialization works so well to integrate newcomers into an organizational environment, since relational belonging has a way of leading to retention and increased tenure in ways orientation aspects, task mastery, and information seeking cannot (Allen & Shanock, 2013). Bukhari & Kamal (2017) demonstrated that POS was negatively related to turnover intentions. If onboarding is done to its full potential, using the Bauer (2010) four-level model as a guide, removing ambiguity, and allowing relational connections to form, this should translate to improved retention and thus longer employee tenures presumably through the mechanisms of perceived support, obligation and reciprocation of that support, commitment, and thus staying.

Maertz, Griffeth, Campbell, and Allen (2007) suggested that obligation to reciprocate perceived support through staying is distinct from affective commitment since an employee can reciprocate support without actually liking the organization, while in the same way, one can like

the organization but not have a felt need to reciprocate support through staying and performing. However, it seems POS engenders obligations to stay, leading to reduced turnover cognitions separate from whether one is affectively committed to the organization, although this is also likely if POS is present (Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Allen, & Smith, 1993). Additionally, some posit that POS tends to develop as employees experience instances of interaction with individuals associated with the organization and extrapolate those into organizational personification wherein they think of the organization with human characteristics, despite it being an entity (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Levinson, 1965).

H2: Onboarding should be positively associated with perceived organizational support.

Perceived supervisor support. Perceived supervisor support (PSS) can be defined as the degree to which an employee believes a manager values the employee's contribution to the workspace (Eisenberger, Stinglhamber, Vandenberghe, Sucharski, & Rhoades, 2002). PSS has repeatedly been shown to relate to POS (Eisenberger et al., 2002; Maertz Jr., Griffeth, Campbell, & Allen, 2007). If a direct supervisor is involved in the newcomer's onboarding experience, this can readily translate to perceived organizational support because of how the supervisor tends to personify the organization in the employee's mind (Eisenberger et al., 2002). According to Greller and Herold (1975), when it came to information about their work, employees tended to rely more on their supervisor than the organization.

Socialization tactics that provide experienced organizational members as role models and positive social support during socialization should also lead to perceptions of a positive social exchange relationship with the organization. The willingness of experienced organizational members, as agents of the organization, to invest time and effort in assisting newcomers should increase perceptions that the organization and its agents care about new employees and are

willing to invest in them (Eisenberger et al., 2002). DeConinck and Johnson (2009) also noted that since PSS predicts a belief that a company is willing to support its members, organizations should be sure to monitor whether supervisors are performing their jobs effectively, and not just tasks but the support aspects. Jokisaari and Nurmi (2009) demonstrated that PSS decreased from month six to 12 after the initial organizational encounter, and that as PSS decreased, so too did role clarity and job satisfaction. Role clarity is an aspect of the clarification stage of Bauer's (2010) four-level model of onboarding that comes before the connection stage. Without enough role clarity, it is possible the positive effects of onboarding could be incomplete or sabotaged.

H3: Onboarding should be positively associated with perceived supervisor support.

H4: PSS should be positively associated with POS.

Perceived Supervisor Support, Perceived Organizational Support, and Turnover

PSS is a vital factor in helping employees want to remain in their jobs. Fern, Avila and Grewal (1989) found a statistically significant effect of supervisor satisfaction on turnover, although the effect was small. Supervisor support was fundamental to salespeople's lower turnover intentions, which decreased when salespeople believed that their supervisor was proud of their work, was willing to assist them, and wanted to supplement their well-being (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009). Allen and Shanock (2013) found that POS relates to voluntary turnover. Previous studies indicated that affective commitment completely mediated the relationships of POS and PSS on turnover (Maertz et al., 2007). The role of supervisor support was linked to turnover intentions even when controlling for affective commitment (Ito & Brotheridge, 2005). Mentoring support (mostly of direct supervisors) in the Army significantly affected turnover (Payne & Huffman, 2005). Maertz et al. (2007) revealed that supervisor-level variables explained significantly more variance in organizational outcomes than did organization-level

variables. Perceived supervisor support has been shown to produce important positive outcomes including positive feelings and trust on a regular basis by providing stimulating assignments and giving recognition and feedback (Dirks & Ferrin, 2002). Finally, Newman, Thanacoody, and Hui (2012) revealed a direct relationship of PSS to turnover intentions as well as an indirect relationship between PSS and turnover intentions mediated by POS.

POS has been shown to be significantly related to PSS and to stem from PSS (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002). If employees perceived supervisor support, they naturally felt compelled to reciprocate the provision of felt needs via the norm of reciprocity, an idea encompassed in and predating social exchange theory wherein people prefer to maintain equitable actions toward each other to mitigate costs and maximize benefits (Blau, 1964; Gouldner, 1960). When employees believe they are receiving supervisor support, they tend to perceive overall organizational support as the supervisor acts as a kind of mental proxy for the organization indicative of the intent or affect of the whole towards them. Employees then tend to respond in reciprocation of perceived organizational support with higher commitment actions toward the organization, especially when they believe the actions of the organization are discretionary (DeConinck & Johnson, 2009). These actions lead to an increase in affective commitment toward the organization which then translates to reducing turnover cognitions and thereby increasing tenure at the organization.

H5: PSS should be positively associated with tenure.

H6: POS should be positively associated with tenure.

Sequential Relationship between PSS and POS

Hutchinson (1997) demonstrated PSS and POS are distinguishable constructs. Rhoades and Eisenberger (2002) illuminated how POS is highly correlated with PSS and originates from

it. Maertz et al. (2007) noted that previous research showed how commitment mediated the relationship between PSS, POS, and turnover indicating a chain of events. Guchait and Back (2016) also found evidence of commitment mediating the relationship between PSS and turnover intentions across three countries. Lastly, Bauer et al. (2007) found that socialization and information seeking related to turnover through the mediator of social acceptance similar to the current study as PSS and POS are forms of social support. Previous literature seems to indicate that methods of social support, namely PSS and POS, have an effect on the relationship of socialization in such a way that a sequential process unfolds wherein social support has an inverse relationship with turnover.

H7: The relationship between onboarding and tenure is mediated by PSS and POS.

Reasons for Leaving

Traditionally, researchers have examined turnover by assessing voluntary as opposed to involuntary turnover, which potentially limits findings by maintaining too broad a perspective by assuming that all leavers are somewhat similar (Bluedorn, 1978; Campion, 1991; Price, 1977). Turnover researchers have also commented on how analyzing individual variables and attitudes within a voluntary turnover framework only have limited ability to predict why people leave, accounting for at most 20% of the variance in turnover (Arnold & Feldman, 1982; Michaels & Spector, 1982; Mobley, Hand, Baker, & Meglino, 1979). Since dichotomizing turnover and assessing individual variables are helpful but limited in scope, other approaches are necessary to continue fleshing out how turnover can be affected. There is value in assessing whether or not a company can control said turnover. If employees leave for reasons outside the company's control, then relationships between variables traditionally predicting turnover will not necessarily hold.

Krausz and Reshef (1992) looked at six overall reasons for leaving one's job, including dissatisfaction with the company, personal need for change, dissatisfaction with one's job, events in the company, labor market situations, and personal non-work related reasons, which they ranked in order of mean score. They also included ten specific reasons for leaving, which included reasons like job content, organizational climate, and geographical distance, among others. Some reasons are controllable by the organization, and some are not, which is the nuance that studies looking into reasons for leaving have considered. When employees leave for avoidable reasons, it may be favorable for the organization if the company could have prevented an employee's departure but chose not to. For instance, if the employee desired greater pay but the company was unable to supply it (Campion, 1991). On the other hand, turnover may be unfavorable for the organization if it is unavoidable (Campion, 1991).

Others have chosen to call the reasons people leave a job either a push or pull motivation, wherein a push motivation occurs when an employee leaves any unwanted circumstance for a situation they believe will be better, and a pull motivation describes a currently agreeable situation that one leaves in hopes it will change to an even better one (Semmer, Elfering, Baillod, Berset, & Beehr, 2014).

In breaking down these types of voluntary turnover, Abelson (1987) made a case early on for other categories, offering avoidable and unavoidable reasons for leaving and creating a taxonomy that will be used to frame reasons for leaving in the current study. Abelson considered voluntary avoidable reasons for leaving as including reasons such as higher pay at another organization, better working conditions at another organization, issues or problems with leadership or administration, and leaving for a better organization. He categorized the following as unavoidable voluntary reasons for leaving: moving to another place because of a spouse, a

mid-career change, staying at home to care for spouse or children, as well as pregnancy and not returning after a limited time. He did not examine involuntary reasons for leaving. Ultimately, his findings were that those who stay at an organization and those who leave for unavoidable reasons were similar in attitudinal measures, but that these groups were significantly different from those who left for avoidable reasons in job satisfaction, organizational commitment, job tension, and withdrawal cognitions. Those leaving for avoidable reasons were significantly lower in satisfaction and commitment and higher in job tension and withdrawal cognitions than the other groups (Abelson, 1987). Lastly, Abelson's results indicated that stayers and unavoidable leavers were older and had been with the organization longer than avoidable leavers. There have been remarkably few studies addressing avoidable vs. unavoidable categorization in turnover research since Abelson's paper. Hom and Griffeth (1995) also affirmed that categorizing turnover by avoidable and unavoidable reasons for leaving was a better way of considering and assessing turnover models.

Ultimately a view of turnover that is framed by push and pull motivations is more employee-centric while a view framed by avoidable vs. unavoidable reasons for leaving is more organization-centric, although these views can be combined to help organizations understand what is motivating employees to leave benefiting both parties.

H8: In an exploratory analysis, the proposed model should be moderated by reasons for leaving.

Turnover and Tenure

Price (1976) describes a few compilations of turnover measures in use since the mid-20th century that have been influential in turnover research, namely Byrt (1957) describing six types of measures, Gaudet (1960) describing 25 measures, and a couple compilations from the

International Labor Review in 1960 describing three types of measures. However, Price points out that the measure of average length of service is not included in these compilations and should be. It was present in the literature long before researchers published the above-mentioned turnover measure compilations. He then asserts that average length of service is a measure of turnover, and that it is sufficiently ubiquitous to be included in the most well-known compilations of turnover measures used regularly.

The current study uses tenure as an indirect indicator of turnover since the entire sample has voluntarily left the organization. Since the total size of the organization at a single point in time is not known, it is not possible to calculate a turnover rate, and thus tenure is an appropriate measure.

Price (1977) points out one of the disadvantages of crude turnover rates is that they have no inherent meaning in many cases. For instance, authors have revealed that a separation rate of 50% could indicate that half the labor force had turned over twice, that a 25% turnover rate could indicate that the entire labor force had turned over four times and so on (Van der Merwe & Miller, 1971). The context of a turnover measure itself is significant, and using tenure can illuminate where turnover is taking place in an organization (Price, 1977). Ideally, tenure and a crude turnover rate would be used in tandem, as one provides information on where turnover is occurring and the other provides information on the volume of turnover. Lacking one measure, the other is sufficient reflecting two sides of the same coin – those who are leaving an organization. Indeed, tenure is inversely related to turnover rate such that as the turnover rate decreases, the length of stay on average increases and vice versa (Price, 1976). Turnover researchers Hom and colleagues commented on Price's comprehensive review of turnover determinants as well as his expansion on March and Simon's early turnover theory (Hom, Lee,

Shaw, & Hausknecht, 2016). Call, Nyberg, Ployhart, and Weekley (2015) even quoted Price in reference to his comment on the fact that absolute turnover may not be the real issue but rather the variance present in that turnover.

Hypotheses:

H1: Onboarding should be positively associated with tenure.

H2: Onboarding should be positively associated with perceived organizational support.

H3: Onboarding should be positively associated with perceived supervisor support.

H4: PSS should be positively associated with POS.

H5: PSS should be positively associated with tenure.

H6: POS should be positively associated with tenure.

H7: The relationship between onboarding and tenure is mediated by PSS and POS.

H8: In an exploratory analysis, the proposed model should be moderated by reasons for leaving.

Proposed Model

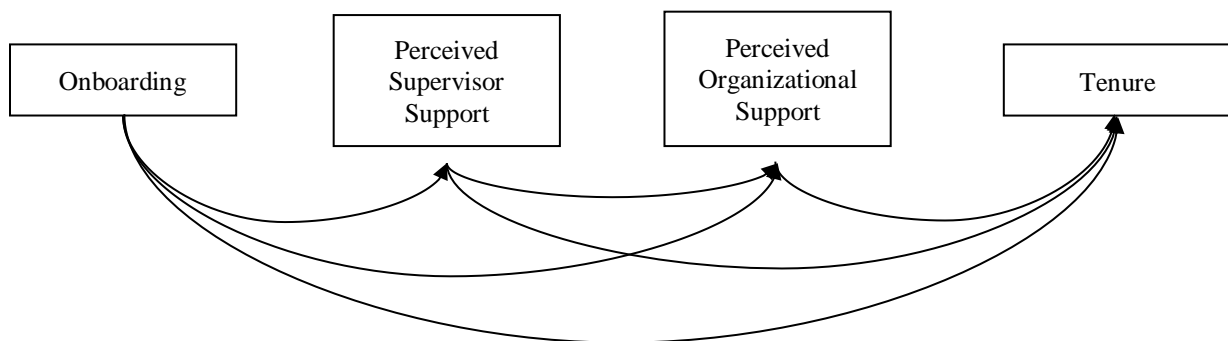


Figure 1. Proposed model of the effect of onboarding on tenure through perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support. These linkages should hold under conditions of avoidable reasons for leaving.

Proposed Model under Conditions of Unavoidable Reasons for Leaving

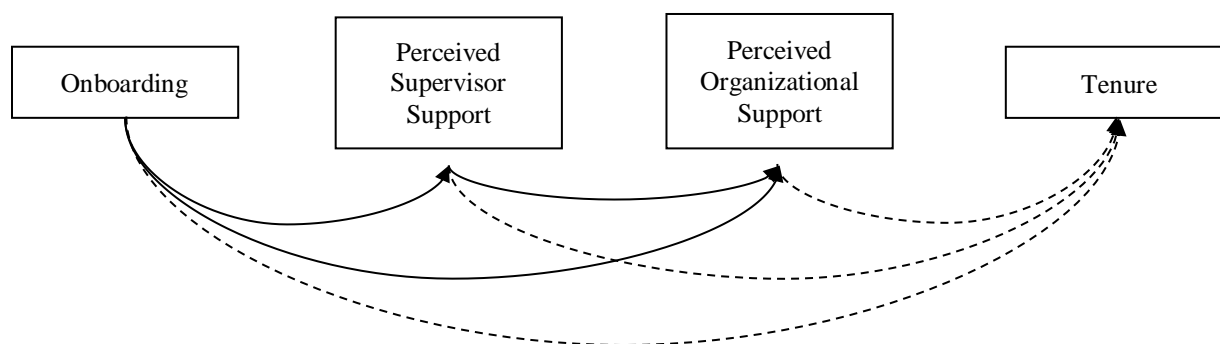


Figure 2. Proposed model of the effect of onboarding on tenure through perceived supervisor support and perceived organizational support. These linkages should not hold under conditions of unavoidable reasons for leaving.

For H8, it is expected that if employees left the company for unavoidable reasons, all pathways from onboarding, PSS, and POS directly to tenure should be attenuated. The rationale is that under conditions in which leaving is not related to company characteristics, these characteristics should not predict how long employees stay at the company.

Hypotheses two, three, and five, if supported would lend support to self-determination theory since relationships here would indicate that onboarding may be fostering social support and in effect helping to meet these need of relatedness that people naturally seek to satisfy. Hypotheses ones, four, six, and seven, if supported, would lend support to relational cohesion theory in that employees may be staying longer in the organization because of the mediators of PSS and POS and thereby are effectively attaching themselves to a collective whole (an organization) thus satisfying relational cohesion. In this case, effective onboarding may lead to effective cohesion as expressed by PSS and POS. Support for these hypotheses may also provide support for work adjustment theory in that if employees have found a somewhat harmonious

relationship between themselves, their supervisor and organization (environment), through effective onboarding practices of training, social support, and uncertainty reduction, they may stay in that environment longer.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

Participants

New employees from a national financial institution in the United States were surveyed about their onboarding experience at the organization and later about their exit attitudes upon leaving. As of December 2016, the organization had 18,125 employees, but this is an unofficial estimate. The author was in contact with a survey research company and requested data for a single institution with onboarding and turnover variables. A single financial institution was chosen which had survey data for onboarding purposes and a separate exit survey including survey items analogous to PSS, POS, and tenure. The author was not privy to any formal onboarding processes ongoing at the organization of interest.

The total sample comprised 421 total employees who participated in both the onboarding and exit surveys. The author accessed the data in retrospect, an archival method of data processing. The sample was comprised of 62.7% male and 34.7% female participants. Not all participants provided their age; however, the average age of men in the sample was 39 years with a range of 22 to 72 years old, while the women in the sample had a mean age of 37 ranging from 21 to 66 years old. The mean age of the sample of 407 who provided the information was 38 years. Age differed slightly across tenure levels, with younger employees having stayed for less time than older employees. Those who had been with the organization for less than a year to up to five years were in their mid-thirties, while those who had been with the organization more

than five years were in their early to mid-forties.

Employees' tenure on the job ranged from less than a day to over 15 years with a mean tenure of 21.6 months and a median tenure of 11.5 months for the 377 participants who provided the information. The sample size of 377 was the sample size used for analysis purposes since all employees examined in the model had to have a measure of tenure. The portion of employees that had been at the company for less than one year was 52.7%, one to three years 32.3%, three to five years 6.2%, five to seven years 2.6%, seven to 10 years 3.1%, and less than one percent had worked at the company for more than 10 years. The ethnic makeup of the sample consisted of 64.8% White, 9.3% Black or African American, 5.5% Hispanic, 1.9% Asian, and 1.2% two or more ethnicities, while 14.5% chose not to respond.

Measures

The financial institution used a survey research firm to provide employees an onboarding experience survey after 90 days on the job. The survey company used a prospective method of survey deployment with quarterly onboarding deployment from Q1 of 2014 to Q4 of 2016. The company used the same survey research firm to disseminate a quarterly exit survey to those employees who voluntarily chose to leave over the course of Q1 of 2012 to Q4 of 2016. The survey research firm deployed the onboarding and exit surveys while assuring participants of full confidentiality regarding their responses. Participants were informed that their employer would not have access to identifying information via the survey invitations. No raw data was given to the financial institution for which the employees worked nor was it requested by the institution.

Onboarding. All onboarding items were initially categorized into Bauer's four-level model of onboarding, which includes the levels of compliance, clarification, culture, and connection. Compliance was comprised of two items, although the correlation between these

items was low at .037, indicating the items were not representing the same construct. There was also little variability for these items. The clarification stage included 15 items with an alpha of .95. The culture stage included nine items with an alpha of .97. The connection stage included 10 items with an alpha of .96. All 33 onboarding items together had an alpha of .986.

An initial exploratory factor analysis was performed on all items together (36 items) to discern whether multiple constructs matching these stages of Bauer's model were present. Four items had to be removed for lack of variance (e.g., dichotomous items) leaving 33 items. Exploratory factor analysis was performed with both the principal axis factoring method and maximum likelihood method and achieved the same results. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin measure of sampling adequacy was .86, higher than the recommended value of .6 indicating sufficient sample size, and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was significant at $p < .001$ indicating the presence of at least one significant factor. Initial eigenvalues demonstrated that the first factor explained 75% of the variance while factor two and three explained 6% and 3.5% additional variance. The EFA indicated a single factor demonstrating a lack of discriminant validity of constructs listed in the Bauer model. Coefficients of all items loaded at .72 or above on a single factor. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed examining one factor with the principal axis factoring method, which is a method that makes no assumptions about errors types, maximizes the unweighted sum of squares in the residual matrix and tends to be better for simple patterns. The CFA indicated that a single factor was the best fit. The scree plots in the EFA and the CFA also indicted a single factor.

In cases where there is a lack of discriminant validity between proposed constructs, it may be best to collapse those that exist into a single overall measure and instances of this are present in the literature with constructs such as transformational leadership (Farrell, 2010).

Three additional items were removed because of missing data. The items to represent onboarding from the initial round of factor analyses minus the three items with missing data (30 items) were collapsed into a composite score of overall onboarding experience for each employee. See Appendix A for all items used in the onboarding composite as well as preliminary categorizations into Bauer's onboarding levels.

Perceived supervisor support. Kottke and Sharafinski (1988) found support for a 16 item scale measuring PSS differentially from POS called the Survey of Perceived Supervisory Support. The survey includes items such as "My supervisor strongly considers my goals and values," "My supervisor really cares about my well-being," "My supervisor cares about my opinions," and "My supervisor takes pride in my accomplishments." The current PSS measure includes five items, seen below, from the employee exit survey of a national survey research company. Cronbach's alpha for these items is .95. A composite score of these items was created to assess the overall perception of supervisor support. The average score of the combined items was 4.55 on a Likert scale of 1 to 6 with an *N* of 407. See Appendix B for exit items categorized as PSS.

1. My manager/supervisor treated me with respect.
2. My manager/supervisor supported my efforts to manage my responsibilities outside of work.
3. The amount of feedback I received from my manager/supervisor was appropriate.
4. My manager/supervisor kept me well informed.
5. My manager/supervisor valued my input.

Perceived organizational support. Eisenberger et al. (1986) found support for a 36 item survey on a seven-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree for

measuring POS called the Survey of Perceived Organizational Support. Items included in the survey include “The organization values my contribution to its well-being,” “The organization provides me little opportunity to move up the ranks (r),” “The organization cares about my opinions,” “My supervisors are proud that I am a part of this organization,” “The organization is willing to help me when I need a special favor”. The current POS measure includes five items from the employee exit survey from a national survey research company seen below. Cronbach’s alpha for these items is .86. A composite score of these items was created to assess the overall perception of organizational support. The average score of the combined items was 4.24 on a Likert scale of 1 to 6 with an *N* of 405. See Appendix B for items categorized as POS.

1. I had the training I needed to do my job.
2. I was valued by the company.
3. I had good opportunities for career advancement.
4. I felt like I was an important part of my team.
5. What I did was important to the success of the company.

An exploratory factor analysis was performed with all items chosen to represent PSS (5) and POS (5) and indicated two factors the first comprising 61.50% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 6.15 and the second comprising an additional 12.77% of the variance with an eigenvalue of 1.28. A confirmatory factor analysis was performed to assess whether the number of factors was a good fit using maximum likelihood extraction and promax rotation since based on previous literature, PSS and POS should be related, and promax rotation allows factors to be related. The results indicated that a two-factor solution was appropriate with the pattern matrix demonstrating all PSS items loaded onto the first factor at .8 or above and all POS items loaded onto the second factor at .6 or above indicating these items did represent different constructs.

Tenure. Tenure was measured from an exit survey questionnaire wherein employees indicated their start date and end date at the organization. The author calculated employee tenure in years and months subtracting employee's start date from their end date for a continuous measure of time at the organization as all employees voluntarily left the organization in this sample. The range was less than a day to about 15 years with a mean of 1.78 years. Since the variable is positively skewed, a log transformation was applied to normalize the distribution.

Reasons for leaving. Employees gave their primary reason for leaving in the exit survey. The company provided reasons for leaving in 33 different categories or 31 not including "no comment" and "other." Based on Dalton (1981) and Abelson (1987) reasons were coded into avoidable and unavoidable. Four additional coders were given the list of reasons for leaving from the exit survey and asked to categorize them as avoidable or unavoidable based on the paradigms of the previously mentioned authors. The Krippendorff's alpha estimate was used to estimate interrater reliability and accounts for chance agreement which is a more reliable estimate than only percent agreement (Hayes & Krippendorff, 2007). The reliability estimate was .815 indicating sufficient consistency among raters. The author defined avoidable reasons for leaving as reasons the organization could have influenced or prevented, such as not receiving organizational support, bad experience with a manager, or insufficient resources to perform the job, while unavoidable reasons for leaving were defined as reasons the organization could not have prevented such as continuing education or leaving to care for family. There were 31 unique reasons for leaving excluding: "no comment" and "other." "Other" reasons for leaving were coded according to the other 31 potential reasons based on an item in the survey asking participants to elaborate on their primary reason for leaving if they selected "Other." Separating reasons for leaving into categories of avoidable and unavoidable created a dichotomous variable

which was used as a moderator in the proposed model. See Appendix C for all reasons for leaving responses to the survey question “Would you please tell us the ONE most important reason why you left or are leaving the company?”

Data Management

The author merged the original two datasets procured (onboarding survey and exit survey) into a single dataset. There were no unique participant identifiers, so original data was used to ensure all participants in the merged dataset completed both the onboarding and exit surveys. Initially identifying information was used as the unique identifiers to create the merged dataset, then unique ID numbers were assigned to each participant, and all identifying information was deleted. The total sample size was 377 people, all of whom were onboarded at and had left a banking institution. The sample size of 377 provides adequate power to detect small correlational and partial correlational effects. There is .80 power to detect even small effect sizes for a linear multiple regression model with three predictors (Soper, 2018). Fritz and MacKinnon (2007) provided sample size guidelines for testing the mediated indirect paths. For two small paths using bias-corrected bootstrapping (beta = .14), the sample size required for .80 power is 462. This model was tested using moderated serial mediation, in Mplus by Muthen and Muthen, to investigate whether the mediation model held under conditions of avoidable or unavoidable reasons for leaving. Moderation effects were tested through difference chi-square tests of model fit setting all paths equal for the avoidable vs. the unavoidable reasons for leaving group.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

Descriptive statistics and correlations. Table 1 displays the means, standard deviations, and *t*-tests for onboarding, PSS, POS, and tenure separately for the avoidable and unavoidable reasons for leaving groups. There was a significant difference in mean onboarding and POS levels between employees who left for avoidable reasons and the group who left for unavoidable reasons. Those who left for avoidable reasons had significantly lower onboarding scores ($M = 4.53, SD = 1.13$) than those who left for unavoidable reasons ($M = 4.78, SD = .96$). Those leaving for avoidable reasons had significantly lower POS scores ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.40$) than those leaving for unavoidable reasons ($M = 4.39, SD = 1.33$).

Table 2 displays the correlations among onboarding, PSS, POS, and tenure separately for the different reasons for leaving groups. The internal consistency reliabilities of each variable are also presented. There were three significant correlations, the first between onboarding and tenure ($r = .17, p < .05$), under conditions of avoidable reasons for leaving which partially supported hypothesis H1. PSS was significantly associated with POS ($r = .65, p < .001$) under both conditions of avoidable as well as unavoidable reasons for leaving supporting H4.

Path analyses. A path analysis was conducted that modeled all direct and indirect paths from onboarding to PSS to POS to tenure. Combined and separate analyses were run for the avoidable vs. unavoidable reasons for leaving groups, with a difference chi-square calculated for the combined analyses to test for the equivalence of the estimated paths for the two matrices. Mediation effects were tested using the bias-corrected bootstrapping of confidence intervals option in Mplus version 5.21 (Muthen & Muthen, 2007) with maximum likelihood estimation

using the covariance matrix. Missing data were handled using full information maximum likelihood.

Results of the path analyses (Figure 1) are presented for the avoidable and unavoidable reasons for leaving group estimates with all paths set as equal, as the difference chi-square for this combined model was not significant $\chi^2 = 5.08$, $df = 6$, $p = .53$ indicating that there was no moderation by this variable which did not support H8. Additionally, another path analysis was performed wherein all direct paths to tenure from onboarding, PSS, and POS were set to equal across the avoidable and unavoidable reasons for leaving groups, and the resulting chi-square was not significant $\chi^2 = 1.69$, $df = 3$, $p = .64$. Bootstrapped mediation analysis indicated that the relationships between onboarding and tenure were not mediated by PSS, POS, or both PSS and POS (95% CI for PSS: [-.005, .014]; POS: [-.007, .007]; both PSS and POS: [-.009, .03]) which did not support H7. In these analyses, the direct path from onboarding to tenure was significant (.156, $p = .003$) supporting H1. Onboarding was not predictive of PSS or POS, which did not support H2 or H3. Supporting H4, PSS was predictive of POS (.65, $p < .001$). PSS predicted tenure (.195, $p < .01$) supporting H5. POS predicted tenure but surprisingly with an opposite effect (-.201, $p < .01$) which did not support H6. Therefore four of the eight hypotheses were supported, although one demonstrated a significant effect in the opposite direction from the hypothesized direction, and four hypotheses were not supported.

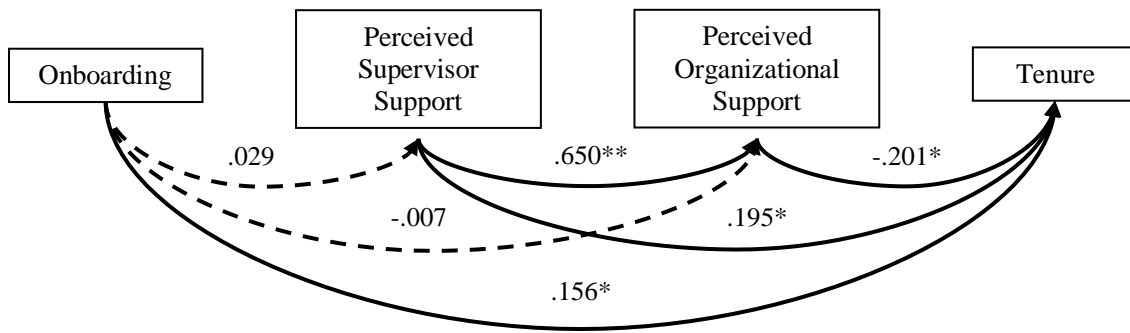


Figure 3. Path diagram results of the proposed model. Significant paths (standardized coefficients) shown as solid lines and nonsignificant paths, as dotted lines. Reasons for leaving was not a significant moderator of model relationships. * = $p < .01$ and ** = $p < .001$

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Onboarding is beneficial to both employees and organizations but to what extent, through what mechanisms, and under what circumstances is still in question. The purpose of the current study was to enhance existing knowledge surrounding organizational socialization and leaving behavior by exploring how onboarding affects employee tenure, and whether this effect might take place through mechanisms of social support or under certain circumstances. Overall, analyses indicated effects for four of the eight hypotheses (H1, H4, H5, H6), although one effect was in the opposite direction of the hypothesis (H6). Analyses indicated no support for the four remaining hypotheses (H2, H3, H7, H8). We found support for initial actions of an organization affecting how long individuals stay at the organization, support for the relationship between perceived supervisor and organizational support, and support for a predictive relationship between supervisor support and how long employees stay. We did not find support for initial organizational experiences relating to or predicting organizational support or supervisor support, nor did we find a predictive sequential relationship of onboarding through PSS or POS on tenure. Finally, analyses did not indicate support for any of the above-proposed relationships differing depending on reasons for leaving the organization.

Employees leaving for unavoidable reasons had higher onboarding and POS scores than those leaving for avoidable reasons. The mean difference in the onboarding experience itself demonstrates an aspect of the effectiveness of onboarding in increasing tenure. Employees who rated their beginning experiences at the organization lower in quality were more likely to have left the organization under circumstances where organizational characteristics might have had an impact on the decision to leave, i.e., although the organization might have the ability and

resources to address avoidable reasons for leaving, for whatever reason they may choose not to. The top three most frequently cited avoidable reasons for leaving in the current sample (excluding salary and compensation, which always appear among the top reasons when solicited) were issues with a manager or supervisor, lack of career development or advancement opportunities and job fit or challenge. Employees who rated their onboarding experience lower may have already felt dissatisfaction with the company that later encouraged leaving for reasons they perceived the company could affect but did not. Leaving for an avoidable reason might have been a product of the characteristics of this particular organization and what reasons they chose to ameliorate versus those they did not. Every organization will have different abilities as well as levels of willingness to affect reasons their employees might leave, not to mention different agendas for doing so. Leaving for avoidable reasons may have been motivated by their perceptions of relative inequity between themselves and the organization, consistent with equity theory as posited by Adams (1964) and Pritchard (1969). Those leaving for avoidable reasons perceived less organizational support at the time of exit than those leaving for unavoidable reasons. If an entity can affect, for instance, lack of career development, by offering more frequent training opportunities and other solutions yet it does not, employees may perceive less support overall and attribute that to the entity even if it is a problem with only another individual or department. Results did not indicate a moderation effect of reasons for leaving. It seems that onboarding is effective regardless of the reason a person leaves.

Initial onboarding experiences at an organization were found to be positively, prospectively related to how long employees stay at the organization. The significant positive association between onboarding experience and tenure at an organization would seem to indicate that treatment of employees at the beginning of their time at an organization had some positive

influence on how long they stayed. Equity theory might also help to explain the direct effect of onboarding on tenure as those who indicated a higher score on maybe have perceived equity between themselves and the organization and thus stayed longer than they otherwise would have (Adams, 1964; Pritchard 1969).

Although onboarding does not seem to affect tenure through variables of social support, there may be a social support aspect within effective onboarding that affects tenure directly just as other direct measure social support variables do. Since multiple studies have demonstrated onboarding affects turnover through organizational commitment (Cable et al., 2013; Klein & Weaver, 2000), it may be beneficial to examine whether a serial process occurs through the mediator of commitment on turnover in the future. It is also possible that those who have been with the organization for less than 2 years are qualitatively different from those who have been with the organization longer than two years and as that these differences could be affecting how onboarding, PSS and POS relate or fail to relate to tenure.

As expected, an employee's perceived supervisor support was strongly associated with their perceived organizational support. This effect may reflect a generally positive attitude unrelated to onboarding which would be consistent with findings as onboarding did not relate directly to PSS or POS. Surprisingly, the hypothesis predicting POS would be positively related to tenure was not supported but demonstrated an inverse effect wherein higher scores on POS predicted shorter tenure. This finding makes little to no sense by itself and goes against the preponderance of literature stating otherwise (Allen & Shanock, 2013; Bukhari & Kamal, 2017; Meyer & Allen, 1991; Meyer, Allen & Smith 1993). The lack of statistical significance of the POS-tenure correlations in Table 2, however, suggest that one should interpret this particular set of findings as simply an anomalous lack of relationship between POS and tenure, which has been

found in previous research where scores of POS were low (mean values between 2.7 and 3.4 for each item on 7 point scale) and did not relate to any work outcomes examined including tenure (Labrague, Petite, Leocadio, Van Bogaert, & Tsaras, 2018). Due to the significant correlation between PSS and POS it is also possible that the strong relationship between PSS and POS is exerting a suppressing effect on the relationship of POS with tenure. After correlating all POS items with tenure individually, one item “I had good opportunities for career advancement” was significantly negatively correlated with tenure. It is possible that this item affected other items in the POS item operationalization since four of the five items were negatively correlated with tenure. It is also possible that this item drove the increased negative relationship of POS with tenure in the mediation model. If this particular item is driving the negative relationship of POS and tenure in the current model then it may be that personal advancement in the company is not a good conceptualization of organizational support especially because personal advancement can be very personal and in fact perhaps only possible by leaving the organization.

Regarding self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), onboarding may assist in creating a context as well as potentially explaining the means of meeting all three needs of relatedness, competence, and autonomy, whereas PSS may analogously meet relatedness needs. Specifically, the results of this study might indicate that if these needs are met, presumably employees will stay longer in their work environment. Meeting these needs, and thereby increased tenure would seem to indicate successful integration into a broader social context in which they may optimally function (Luthans & Youssef, 2007).

The relationships of onboarding, PSS, and POS, each independently to tenure, as well as the relatedness of PSS to POS, may lend support to relational cohesion theory (Yoon & Lawler, 2006). Employees may accrue each or certain types of capital – human, social, and cultural -

over time in an organization, but effective onboarding could help to establish them all, within a finite time frame. Results indicating the positive predictive relationship between onboarding and PSS each directly on tenure would seem to indicate that those who are staying longer in the organization not only made an actual initial attachment but did so presumably upon receiving the types of capital required to make said attachment. If employees stayed longer in relation to their onboarding experience, not only may employees have made a theoretical initial attachment to the collective whole of the organization but increased tenure could perhaps indicate they also made conscious choices to continue that attachment. Conceivably in this instance, employees' perceived supervisor support grew independently from their onboarding experience because it may have been fostered by other means, e.g. perceptions of organizational justice (Li, Castaño, & Li, 2018). It should be noted that attachment does not mean that a separation will never occur, only that the foundational aspects needed to make an attachment were supposedly in place so that the attachment could occur. However, these implications are theoretical and the current study did not directly measure the constructs mentioned within the theories.

Likewise, results may lend some support to the theory of work adjustment (Lofquist & Dawis, 1969). Onboarding can assist in establishing initial expectations and context within a new work environment. Employees who have information on environment and expectations sooner may be able to evaluate their perceived fit with the environment and thereby decide whether to self-select out if necessary. The idea plays out in the current sample through the predictive relationship of onboarding on tenure and PSS on tenure such that, if onboarding experiences are effective, and employees perceive support from their manager, employees may stay longer, perhaps perceiving correspondence between themselves and their work context. Leaving for unavoidable reasons may have had little influence, if any, on perceiving a lack of correspondence

because there was no misalignment of employees' desires and goals with their reason to leave; however, those leaving for avoidable reasons may have perceived significant misfit between their desires and goals and the capability of their current context to deliver those desires. For instance, those leaving for lack of career development options might have observed an environment unfit to deliver this desire, once they had entered the environment and so perceived a lack of correspondence which motivated leaving.

Given the near-zero correlations between onboarding experiences and PSS and POS at exit, it is consistent that there were no mediation effects of onboarding on tenure through PSS, POS, or PSS and POS. The lack of mediation effects may indicate that the aforementioned theories are incorrect or it may suggest that the measures and research design were inadequate to test the theories. The latter is most likely the case as the variables in the current study were not intended to be direct proxies of the concepts mentioned in the background theory. However, the lack of relationship from onboarding to either PSS or POS may call in to question socialization theories.

The lack of significant mediated effects between onboarding experiences and tenure, however, is troubling in terms of testing the above theories only in that these results do not directly support them. It is possible that onboarding created socialization experiences that were not captured by employees' perceptions in the exit survey. More sensitive exit survey questions or questions more focused explicitly on retrospective perceptions of the onboarding process may have provided more evidence for theoretically supportive mediational effects. A lack of mediation is also consistent with the possibility of a generally positive bias in the sample unrelated to onboarding.

Onboarding, supervisor, and organizational support have been shown in the past to relate

to positive organizational outcomes and in particular, decreased turnover as outlined in the introduction. In this instance, the current study has provided additional evidence of the effectiveness of these variables on the outcome of tenure, a particular measure of turnover. If organizations desire for employees to remain, actions should be taken to foster, at least according to the current study, effective onboarding and PSS as well as provide the necessary resources and contextual meaning to their employees to help them perceive support that would engender commitment to stay.

Johnson and Graen (1973) observed that, despite the prolific examination of turnover, there is still little known about the connection between early organizational experiences of new employees and their turnover decisions. The current study enhances the literature on both onboarding and turnover in a few ways. Considering onboarding as the impetus of a serial mediation allow us to examine onboarding as having a more distal role to play in important business outcomes. Therefore, it adds to the onboarding literature. Second, in examining the moderator of reasons for leaving, any significant relationships would have been shown to be conditionally affected by this variable. Examining reasons for leaving is also an alternative way of considering aspects of turnover. Third, Akremi, Nasr, and Richebé (2014) commented on how past authors have called for turnover models which incorporate both content and process. The current study acts as a turnover model in analyzing how onboarding and attitudes affect tenure as antecedents although there was no support for the process of mediation, this is useful because further inquiry may result in choosing different mediators wherein onboarding acts on tenure. Few studies focus exclusively on tenure as a measure of turnover. The use of tenure as the criterion variable contributes to research on turnover but does so from a different perspective. Lastly, this study sheds a bit more light on the story of what variables affect employee tenure in

such a way that employees are motivated to stay. Initial organizational experiences which provide clarity, cultural knowledge, and connection as well as independently fostered supervisor support promoted employee longevity. Understanding more about the individual aspects required to promote longer tenure regardless of industry and under what conditions if any is an additional value add of this study.

Implications

Since the current study does not indicate that onboarding is a driver of either PSS or POS, it may be that these are independent constructs that should be fostered via more direct means and not indirectly through onboarding. This means that organizations cannot necessarily depend on onboarding to foster these positive attitudes. In trying to influence POS through onboarding, there may be enough individual differences based on particular job positions that it is difficult to measure whether POS has globally increased in an organization by only targeting augmentation of an onboarding process. Other authors have found similar results and noted that managers must behave in ways that foster employee identification with the organization to reduce turnover (Akremi, Colaianni, Portoghese, Galleta, & Battistelli, 2014). In light of the effectiveness of specific socialization tactics revealed in previous literature, effective onboarding programs should contain orientation to new surroundings, clarification of specific jobs contextualized within the larger organization's values and mission, sharing of cultural norms and history to aid with job contextualization, and most importantly, available and fostered connection time between employees. Tactics which involve incorporating rather than separating newcomers will be most effective in fostering connections which allow adoption of cultural norms, clear lines of communication, and faster time to production and performance.

Limitations

Many authors have commented on the limitations of self-reported reasons for leaving a job (Catania, 1964; Long, 1951; Pettman, 1973; J.L. Price, 1977; Rice, Hill, & Trist, 1950; Taylor & Weiss, 1972). Among cited limitations are the ideas that those listing a reason for leaving may be hesitant to accurately report it if the reason might reflect poorly on the organization or one's supervisor as well as fear of the reason impacting other job opportunities, or potential future reemployment at the current organization (Price, 1977). These reservations may translate to reporting more "benign" reasons for leaving (unavoidable when the reason was avoidable) or choosing one that was nothing close to the real reason. It seems the risk in using reasons for leaving from a data standpoint is not only that employees may misreport their reasons but that there few ways to ascertain the "real" reasons. Lopez (1965) noted that employees frequently give reasons for leaving in error. Instances may occur where employees report leaving for one reason, but what drove their departure was something else less perceptible to them.

Generally, researchers take reasons for leaving at face value with these caveats in mind. Carter (2015) commented that in many cases there are systemic problems at organizations that lead to good employees leaving yet most companies do not disseminate exit surveys or interviews that could help reveal areas of opportunity that are driving employees away. In the current study, all participants left voluntarily as opposed to involuntarily, and while it might be feasible to trust that those leaving for unavoidable reasons more accurately reported their reason, there is no sure way to be sure what the real reason was, although this is a risk generally worth taking in this type of qualitative research. However, in this sample, there were many instances of participants reporting issues with supervisors or other reasons that might presumably reflect

poorly on the organization, yet employees still reported them. Perhaps confidentiality encouraged these responses in the surveys.

The sample size of the current study was relatively small, although this did not affect detection of direct effects. However, it could have impeded the detection of indirect/mediational and moderation effects. Sample size is a common limitation in actual organizational data, and in particular archival data, as the more information is learned about the data at one's disposal often, the less one can use. Future studies attempting to examine these variables should implement methods to collect as much data as necessary based on beforehand ascertained estimates of necessary sample sizes to have enough power to detect all effects.

Finally, because methods for obtaining data involved self-report measures in online survey formats, common method variance, which is the variance due to the measurement method instead of the variables of interest, may be present (Fiske, 1982). Common method variance is problematic since it can affect proposed variable relationships by either inflating or deflating them, leading to Type I and Type II errors, depending on how much variance the measurement method accounts for (Jones, 1986; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003; Tang, Liu, Oh, & Weitz, 2014). Method variance has been shown to impact statistical relationships differentially, depending on the field of study (Cote & Buckley, 1987). However, there are some procedural adjustments which can help reduce method variance, including ensuring measures of the predictor and criterion variables are from different sources and introducing time lags. Time lags may be used temporally, psychologically, or methodologically and help to reduce bias by allowing responses to fade from memory thereby influencing later responses less as well as removing retrieval cues that might be brought about by the survey taking context (Podsakoff et al., 2003). In the current study, a survey measured onboarding experience earlier than the

criterion variable of tenure, which was measured in conjunction with the attitude variables. Common method variance undoubtedly inflated the correlation between PSS and POS. However, the period between measures was not controlled for employees since the data was business use data accessed archivally. The same employees took both measures and the research questions revolved around how onboarding affected the same employees' experiences later. While typically a boon, the time lag between measures of onboarding and PSS, POS, and tenure, was not controlled and may have been inordinately long for some relationships examined and proposed and thereby could have potentially led to masking relationships that actually exist.

Future Directions

In the current study, the author used a unitary onboarding composite measure because exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the 33 items representing the construct yielded a single factor accounting for most of the variance. If onboarding is a unitary construct, which accounts for all initial perceptions about a newcomer's integration experience, then factor analyses of similar items should reflect that. However, Taormina's (1994) onboarding survey was able to differentiate subconstructs of onboarding, and this might affect the model proposed herein. It would be beneficial to attempt to validate scales like Taormina's or the items contained in the current study to see which best reflects the construct of onboarding. Another question that would be useful to attempt to answer is how much longer employees tend to stay since we have evidence that they do stay longer when initial actions to incorporate them into an organization are effective. The average tenure at this organization for this sample was just under two years, but looking into how many more people stayed beyond two years and how much longer they stayed would be a more nuanced aspect to assess.

The concept of avoidable versus unavoidable reasons for leaving has been used dichotomously but may be more informative as a continuous construct. Campion (1991) gave the example of an employee quitting for a small pay raise as a more avoidable reason than quitting for a promotion or than quitting to raise or care for family. In that case, a continuous measure of reasons for leaving would acknowledge that most turnover is avoidable to some extent and that whether the reason is avoidable or not is a function of the organizational constraints at play (Campion, 1991). In addition, it would be helpful to assess over what period of time avoidable reasons for leaving motivated leaving behavior. For instance, was the avoidable reason more chronic building to a breaking point at which leaving took place or was it more acute motivating behavior change quickly?

Lastly, the study examined tenure in the context of employees who had all left voluntarily. It would be beneficial to use both traditional crude turnover rates and tenure, as well as including employees in the sample who left for voluntary and involuntary reasons to acquire a more holistic picture of how onboarding, PSS, and POS affected those at the organization. Others might examine the proposed model under different classifications of turnover which could potentially lead to more nuanced results. Calculating turnover rates at different points in time throughout the study, such as when collecting onboarding, PSS, and POS scores allows researchers to see whether rates are being actively affected at different points in attitude assessment, not to mention whether those rates might depend on increasing or declining attitudes. In conjunction with these steps, it would also provide additional insight to be able to observe turnover rates and tenures by organization type or type of occupation, but this bleeds into the codification of turnover which authors like Price (1976) have touched on. Wallace & Gaylor (2012) commented that examining turnover as uniform may overstate its' aspects when

looking specifically at functional and dysfunctional turnover. Uniformly looking at all voluntary turnover may lead to the same conclusions when nuanced differences are occurring such as frequency of leavers in high versus low seniority positions.

Conclusion

The current study demonstrated that onboarding and PSS, are variables that contribute to increased employee tenure. The proposed moderated mediation model was not supported, indicating that lengthening tenure does not occur as a serial mediation process through PSS and POS, but rather directly, from fostering the variables of onboarding and PSS. Employees who desire to stay in an organization as a committed member should look for organizations which foster integration and attachment through effective, formal, and engaging onboarding processes. Organizations who wish to attract and keep employees for more extended periods should foster supervisor support as well as build into an onboarding program that reflects the values of the organization, as well as how it wants its employees to perceive their roles as part of the broader organizational context.

APPENDIX A

TABLES

Table 1. Sample size, means, and standard deviations for study variables by moderating groups.

Variable	Avoidable			Unavoidable			<i>t</i> - test	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>	95% CI	
	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>				LL	UL
1. Onboarding	222	4.53	1.13	149	4.78	0.96	-2.31	0.022*	0.24	-0.47	-0.04
2. PSS	213	4.44	1.64	145	4.63	1.57	-1.12	0.265	0.12	-0.54	0.15
3. POS	212	4.07	1.40	145	4.39	1.33	-2.17	0.030*	0.23	-0.61	-0.03
4. Tenure (months)*	187	1.12	0.43	131	1.12	0.43	0.33	0.744	0.02	-0.08	0.11
4. Tenure (months)*	179	1.15	.41	122	1.17	.37	-.29	.769	0.05	-0.10	.08
Tenure (months)	179	24.22	32.11	122	22.5	26.96	.47	.641	.06	-5.31	8.61

Note. *M* = Mean. *SD* = Standard Deviation. *Tenure was measured in months and was log transformed. For both measures of tenure those with 0 and less than 3 months tenure were removed, *N* = 301. *t*-test = independent samples *t*-test. *d* = Cohen's *d* effect size.

* *p* < .05

Table 2. Correlations and internal consistency reliabilities for study variables.

Variable	1	2	3	4
1. Onboarding	(.99)	-0.02	0.07	0.13
2. PSS	0.06	(.95)	.65**	0.12
3. POS	-0.02	.65**	(.86)	-0.09
4. Tenure (months)	0.17*	0.04	-0.06	(N/A)

Note: Alpha reliability estimates are reported on the diagonal. PSS, perceived supervisor support; POS, perceived organizational support. Correlations between variables under avoidable reasons for leaving on the lower diagonal. Correlations between variables under unavoidable reasons for leaving are on the upper diagonal.

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$

APPENDIX B
ONBOARDING ITEMS

<i>Onboarding Items</i>				
#	Bauer Level Classification	Topic	Item	Measure
1	Culture	Organizational Knowledge	I understand our Leadership Competencies.	6 point scale
2	Connection	Acceptance	I felt personally welcomed by my new team.	6 point scale
3	Compliance	Resources	I received an appropriate amount of information.	6 point scale
4	Connection	Acceptance	I was made to feel comfortable in my surroundings.	6 point scale
5	Clarification	Resources	I received all the materials and equipment I needed to begin my job.	Yes/No
6	Compliance	Resources	I was issued a company identification badge.	Yes/No
7	Culture	Advisor/Mentor	I was assigned an onboarding advisor, team member, or contact to help me assimilate into the company.	Yes/No
8	Culture	Advisor/Mentor	I am satisfied with my onboarding advisor's availability to meet with me.	6 point scale
9	Culture	Advisor/Mentor	I had a positive onboarding experience due to the efforts of my onboarding advisor.	6 point scale
10	Clarification	Manager	On average, I have the opportunity to meet with my manager at least: 1 once a month 2 twice a month 3 three times a month 4 four times a month 5 I do not regularly meet with my manager	Multiple Choice
11	Clarification	Manager	Overall, I am satisfied with my manager's availability to meet with me.	6 point scale
12	Connection	Recognition	I have been recently recognized or praised for doing good work.	6 point scale
13	Connection	Acceptance	My manager has demonstrated concern for me as a person.	6 point scale
14	Connection	Manager	I have a trusting and open relationship with my manager.	6 point scale
15	Clarification	Manager	My manager clearly defined expectations for my performance.	6 point scale
16	Connection	Manager	I had a positive onboarding experience due	6 point

#	Bauer Level Classification	Topic	Item	Measure
17	Clarification	Training	to the efforts of my manager. I received the necessary training to do my job right.	scale Scaled
18	Clarification	Training	I received that training at the appropriate time.	Scaled
19	Clarification	Job Knowledge	I know who to ask when I have a question.	Scaled
20	Culture	Organizational Knowledge	I am well informed about what goes on in the company.	Scaled
21	Culture	Culture	I understand the company's Core Values.	Scaled
22	Culture	Culture	I understand how to apply these Core Values to my work.	Scaled
23	Culture	Culture	I understand the future direction of the company.	Scaled
24	Culture	Culture	The culture of the company has met the expectations I developed during the interview and hiring process.	Scaled
25	Connection	Coworkers	My work group functions as a team.	Scaled
26	Connection	Coworkers	I had a positive onboarding experience due to the efforts of my team.	Scaled
27	Clarification	Expectations	My job responsibilities meet the expectations I formed during the interview and hiring process.	Scaled
28	Clarification	Expectations	My workload meets the expectations I formed during the interview and hiring process.	Scaled
29	Clarification	Expectations	My work schedule meets the expectations I formed during the interview and hiring process.	Scaled
30	Clarification	Resources	Access the materials and equipment I need to do my job right.	Scaled
31	Clarification	Resources	Access the information I needed to do my job right.	Scaled
32	Clarification	Job Knowledge	Understand my role and responsibilities.	Scaled
33	Clarification	Job Knowledge	Develop my job knowledge.	Scaled
34	Clarification	Organizational Knowledge	Understand how my work impacts the company's Overall Performance.	Scaled
35	Connection	Coworkers	Successfully build relationships with other the company employees.	Scaled
36	Connection	Job Satisfaction	Overall, I am satisfied with my experience during my first three months at the company.	Scaled
37			If there is anything on which you would like to comment, whether addressed by the survey or not, please use the space provided.	Open Ended

Table A1. All scaled items rated with a 6 point Likert scale with anchors of Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Moderately Agree, Strongly Agree.

APPENDIX C

EXIT ITEMS

Exit Survey Items

#		Topic	Item	Measure
1		Resources	I had access to the information I needed to do my job.	Scaled
2		Expectations	I understood what was expected of me in my job.	Scaled
3		Development	I had a clear career path with the company.	Scaled
4		Benefits	I understood the benefits available to me.	Scaled
5		Compensation	I believe that the better I performed, the better I was compensated.	Scaled
6	PSS	Manager	My manager/supervisor treated me with respect.	Scaled
7		Culture	The company puts a high value on customer service.	Scaled
8		Diversity	The company supports workforce diversity.	Scaled
9		Job Satisfaction	I liked the work I did.	Scaled
10		Resources	I had the materials I needed to do my job.	Scaled
11		Benefits	I was satisfied with the company's employee benefits.	Scaled
12		Compensation	I had a clear understanding of my total compensation package.	Scaled
13	POS	Training	I had the training I needed to do my job.	Scaled
14	PSS	Manager	My manager/supervisor supported my efforts to manage my responsibilities outside of work.	Scaled
15	POS	Recognition	I was valued by the company.	Scaled
16	PSS	Manager	The amount of feedback I received from my manager/supervisor was appropriate.	Scaled
17		Coworkers	My work group functioned as a team.	Scaled
18		Coworkers	I had friends at work.	Scaled
19	POS	Development	I had good opportunities for career advancement.	Scaled
20	PSS	Manager	My manager/supervisor kept me well informed.	Scaled
21		Benefits	The 401K program offered by the company was satisfactory.	Scaled
22		Manager	My manager/supervisor was a good coach.	Scaled

#	Topic	Item	Measure
23	Organizational Commitment	I would be proud to refer a friend or relative to the company for employment.	Scaled
24	POS Value	I felt like I was an important part of my team.	Scaled
25	Recognition	The amount of recognition I received was appropriate.	Scaled
26	Benefits	The medical plans available at the company were satisfactory.	Scaled
27	PSS Manager	My manager/supervisor valued my input.	Scaled
28	POS Value	What I did was important to the success of the company.	Scaled
29	Compensation	I was fairly compensated compared with similar positions in the Financial Services industry.	Scaled
30	Organizational Commitment	I would consider reemployment with the company in the future.	Scaled
31	Compensation	Were you eligible for incentive compensation?	Yes/No
32	Compensation	My incentive opportunities encouraged me to exhibit behaviors and produce results aligned with the company's strategic objectives.	Scaled
33	Reason for Leaving	Would you please tell us the ONE most important reason why you left or are leaving the company?	Categorical - 31 possible selections
34	Reason for Leaving	If you selected 'Other', please describe further the most important reason why you left the company.	Open Ended
35	Reason for Leaving	Please provide specific details concerning your most compelling reason for leaving the company.	Open Ended
36	Reason for Leaving	Please provide any changes that could have been made to prevent you from leaving.	Open Ended
37	Reason for Leaving	Please describe one aspect of the employment experience at the company that you would like to see improved.	Open Ended
38	Competitive Position	If you left the company for another organization, what type of organization did you join?	Open Ended
39	Organizational Offerings	If you left the company for another organization, what did they offer that the company did not?	Open Ended

Table B1. All scaled items rated with a 6 point Likert scale with anchors of Strongly Disagree, Moderately Disagree, Slightly Disagree, Slightly Agree, Moderately Agree, Strongly Agree.

APPENDIX D

REASONS FOR LEAVING

<i>Reason for Leaving</i>	<i>Code</i>
concerns about diversity	Avoidable = 1
dissatisfaction with work space/physical environment	Avoidable = 1
good performance was not recognized/valued	Avoidable = 1
inadequate benefits/benefits cost	Avoidable = 1
issues with coworker	Avoidable = 1
issues with manager/sup	Avoidable = 1
job fit/challenge	Avoidable = 1
lack of career development/advancement opportunities	Avoidable = 1
lack of communication	Avoidable = 1
lack of job security	Avoidable = 1
lack of tools/resources	Avoidable = 1
lack of training	Avoidable = 1
performance goals	Avoidable = 1
salary/compensation	Avoidable = 1
the company's values/culture	Avoidable = 1
uncertainty about the company's future	Avoidable = 1
unsafe working conditions	Avoidable = 1
work schedule	Avoidable = 1
work/life balance	Avoidable = 1
workload	Avoidable = 1
care for children	Unavoidable = 2
care for other family member	Unavoidable = 2
career change	Unavoidable = 2
continue education	Unavoidable = 2
incentive opportunity	Unavoidable = 2
medical condition	Unavoidable = 2
no comment	Unavoidable = 2
other(please describe)	Unavoidable = 2
personal reasons	Unavoidable = 2
relocation	Unavoidable = 2
retirement	Unavoidable = 2
transportation issues	Unavoidable = 2
work location (travel time)	Unavoidable = 2

Table C1. Reasons for Leaving Categories – for exit survey item “Would you please tell us the ONE most important reason why you left or are leaving the company?”

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